

**Meeting of the Northborough Council on Aging
June 13, 2023 – 5:30PM – Northborough Senior Center**

As the hub for all aspects of healthy aging, the mission of the Northborough Council on Aging/Senior Center is to enrich and enhance the lives of older adults.

Call to Order: A meeting of the Council on Aging of the Town of Northborough was called to order at 5:35 PM by Adrienne Cost, Chair with the following also present:

Linda Cragin, Member
Theresa Lee, Member
Jerry Anderson, Member
Paula Moore, Member
Alli DellaRovere, Member

Fran Bakstran, Member
Henry Squillante, Friends
Kendra Faldetta, Director

The following COA members were not present: Virginia Simms George, Elizabeth Nasser, Mitch Cohen, Select Board rep. and Joan Frank, School Committee rep. The ongoing absence of representation from the Select Board was noted, representation to the various boards, committees and commissions is under discussion. Adrienne was asked to follow up and ask for consistent attendance at the COA meetings.

1. Approval of the Minutes:

The minutes for the May 2023 meeting were approved.

2. Friends Report:

Henry provided the Friend's report. A fundraiser will be held on June 21st with the Cellar Restaurant providing profits to the Friends; people are already making reservations and some seatings are sold out (take out is not available). A car show is under consideration for the fall with the Country Store fair in November. A car wash is planned for August 4th in the afternoon – a Friday so you can get your car washed on the way home from work.

3. Director's Report:

Kendra shared an extensive and beautiful illustration of the many new activities she has planned, ranging from educational to health to social. The average daily attendance is 99 unique individual badge-ins per day (this does not include those who forget to badge-in, the activities held off site that still have to be managed and the continuous outreach and support to those that need assistance) and continues to climb.

The building looks great with the support of DPW – the driveway has been sealed and they planted flowers. The building is now 10 years old and preventive/proactive maintenance is important. Kendra is hoping to get the carpets and furniture steamed cleaned. This is a public health issue given the high utilization of the building and a population at risk of COVID, flu and pneumonia.

Coffee with the Police Chief involved most members of the department who were seen as professional, respectful, and appreciative of the collaboration with the Senior Center staff.

The many and varied activities currently being offered and planned are highly successful – all exercise programs are filled, dinners sold out, art and cooking programs have wait lists and the respite service (DayBreak) for individuals with dementia to give their families a break has a new focal point – a window birdfeeder. The activities are consciously developed to reach seniors of varying ages and abilities.

Jocelyn continues to be very busy with outreach efforts and joined the meeting briefly. Kendra and Jocelyn worked to ensure the Senior Tax Work Off program is being implemented correctly; unfortunately, one resident who valued this program tremendously, was denied due to the incorrect interpretation of information.

Kendra is aware that some of the larger Be Well community events, like the Summer 2023 Kickoff Event, don't have activities that are of interest to seniors. She and Jocelyn will attend and bring materials that drive the conversation of Ageism and talk about ageism as an important part of the work the senior center does. Kendra and Jocelyn are building a library of children's books about positive and

diverse aging role models that can be checked out and shared.

4. WRTA:

After a lot of data collection and advocacy, Kendra is pleased to share that the driver wage increase was accepted at Town Meeting and will become effective July 1st. Future raises will not need to go to Town Meeting, giving Kendra more authority as the director. A driver application was received today. Free fares will continue until June 2024.

5. Springwell (formerly Bay Path):

Communication is still challenging with Springwell and the requirements of the recent release of the RFP for Title III funds made it impossible to respond from a Northboro perspective. Fran has reached out to Jeff Leland who serves as an at-large representative and Jeff said there was little communication to the Board. Linda and Fran will work on a communication to Springwell and EOEA expressing the board's concerns.

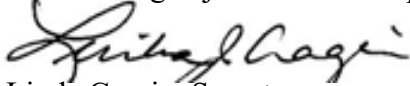
6. Old/New Business and Community Awareness:

Westborough's town manager requested and funded a study to assess the needs of senior in that community. The study was completed by the Center for Social and Demographic Research on Aging, Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston. Northborough could benefit from a similar study.

At the recent selectperson's meeting, use of the Senior Center by community groups was raised with the implied response that this was a good idea. The board discussed the many concerns that arise from this type of assumption. The COA staff are already stretched to cover the volume of activities and people that come thru the doors and increase in outreach efforts and the corresponding complexity of concerns, the constant set-up and clean-up of the rooms, the wear and tear on a building designed for senior and staffed with minimal janitorial and maintenance support, and the age of the furniture and efforts to maintain it. Staff are needed on site to support the Senior Center's activities and cannot flex their schedules to cover other groups.

The need to continue this discussion was apparent but given the late hour, further discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.



Linda Cragin, Secretary